

For owners who wish to preserve high quality lands in a natural state, another option is to register the site under the North Carolina Registry of Natural Areas Program administered by the NC NHP. This program relies solely on voluntary agreements. Benefits include management prescriptions, some degree of statutory protection from pipelines and transmission lines, and public recognition (if desired). For more information, write to N.C. Natural Heritage Program, Division of Parks and Recreation, P.O. Box 27687, Raleigh, NC 27699-1615.

Another flexible but permanent option--one that becomes fixed to the property deed--is the conservation easement. This increasingly popular conservation option allows the owner to retain title of the property and to exercise certain property rights, including control of access to the public. Other rights, such as the right to develop the site, are deeded over to a recognized conservation organization established to preserve such land in a natural state. Conservation easements can be sold or donated, and can confer state and federal tax benefits to the owner. For more information, write to North Carolina Coastal Land Trust, 720 Market Street, Wilmington, N.C. 28401.

When an owner of a high quality natural area does not wish to maintain an active involvement in the management and is willing to part with the tract, transfer of ownership through sale or donation to a conservation organization or agency is the simplest way of assuring permanent protection. As with the conservation easement, there may be state and federal tax benefits associated with the transfer of property. Two private conservation organizations that acquire natural areas either by donation or purchase are the North Carolina Coastal Land Trust, 720 Market Street, Wilmington, N.C. 28401; and the North Carolina Nature Conservancy, Suite 201, 4011 University Drive, Durham, N.C. 27707.